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nobility and gentry, and English residents in Genoa. The pleasant confraternity of effort between professors and amateurs which these concerts have been a means of introducing here, gives rise to the most agreeable spirit of sympathy and inclination to be pleased among those who listen, as well as those who perform; and the result is a thorough enjoyment of a description of musical entertainment hitherto unknown in this "superb" city of Italy. To English readers a portion of this pleasure may be communicated through the interest which they will probably take in the fact, that three of the young amateur performers, who took part in this operatic selection, are a son and two daughters of one who was formerly well-known to lovers of music in England as Clara Novello, now Countess Gigliucci. Her children inherit her musical endowment; while the two daughters, in addition to the gift of voice, are excellent pianoforte players: and it is gratifying to see the simple elegance with which, as amateurs, these young ladies lend their aid in an art of which their mother was so distinguished an ornament.

The third and fourth of Signor Lavagnino's concerts, on the 7th and 14th December, afforded farther testimony of the good feeling with which accomplished rank combines with professional achievement in these performances; for the programmes included a quartett of Beethoven, No. 1, for two violins, viola, and violoncello, played by the concert-giver and his brother artists; two of Mendelssohn's vocal duets, sung by Miss Edith Mozley and Countess Valeria Gigliucci; Mendelssohn's pianoforte Concerto, No. 2, by Countess Portia Gigliucci; two ballads, sung by the sweet tenor voice of Major Alexander; De Beriot's Concerto, No. 7, performed by Signor Lavagnino and Countess Valeria Gigliucci; two arias, sung by Countess Brancalone; one of Beethoven's pianoforte sonatas, played by Miss Mozley; Godefrid's fantasia on the harp, "La danse des sylphes," exquisitely played by the young harpist of the Carlo Felice Theatre, Signora Sacconi; and Gounod's sublime choral Christmas hymn for female voices, "Noël," sung by the lady members of Signora Beati's Philharmonic class.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE concerts at this establishment during the past month have been more than usually active. Mendelssohn's *Reformation Symphony*, played here for the first time in England, under the able direction of Mr. Manns, created an impression upon the audience such as we have rarely seen, even when the greatest classical works have been presented. The enthusiasm of the audience was manifested throughout the work by repeated bursts of applause; and the exquisite third movement was redemanded with a decision not to be resisted. At the last concert of the year, on the 21st ult., Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* was very finely performed: indeed we have seldom heard this excellent band and chorus to greater advantage. Every movement was played with a precision and delicacy which cannot be too highly commended; and the solo singers—Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, Miss Julia Elton, Mr. Cummings, and Mr. L. Thomas—were thoroughly efficient in the whole of the difficult music allotted to them. At the concerts commencing on the 18th instant, we are promised a Symphony of Schubert's hitherto unheard; and several other new compositions, which have been procured, during a recent visit to Vienna, by Mr. Grove, the Secretary to the Crystal Palace.

ST. GEORGE'S OPERA HOUSE.

THE efforts of Mr. German Reed to establish a house for the performance of operettas should scarcely be too harshly criticised at first; for many are the difficulties he has to contend with in forming a working company sufficiently good to sustain the principal parts, and yet not possessing the ambition to attempt grand operas. Mr. Sullivan's operetta, *The Contrabandista*, contains some pleasing and clever music, to which we should like to see more justice done than appears to be within the power of Messrs. Neil-

son, Edgar Osborne, and Mrs. Aynsley Cook to bestow. Offenbach's operetta, *Puss in Petticoats*, suffered from the same cause; and wishing the speculation every success, we are inclined to suspend any further opinion upon the enterprise until vocalists of more power are obtained for the leading characters.

In our next number will appear the commencement of a complete analysis of Mendelssohn's "Reformation Symphony," by Mr. J. W. Davison, with copious illustrations in music-type.

HER Majesty's Theatre, we regret to say, was totally destroyed by fire on Friday night, the 6th ult. How the calamity occurred it appears impossible to ascertain with any degree of accuracy; for it is reported that the two firemen on duty went their rounds at half past 10 o'clock, and found "all correct." About five minutes before 11 the fire broke out, and in an incredibly short time the entire building was a heap of ruins. The following account of the Establishment (condensed from the *Weekly Dispatch*) will, we think, prove interesting to our readers.

The theatre just destroyed was built in 1790. The interior was designed by Novosielski, and afforded the first instance of the adoption of the horseshoe for the auditory in English theatres. The house was remodelled in 1818 and 1820, by Nash and Repton, the exterior in the Roman-Doric style. The bas-relief on the Haymarket front, representing the progress of Music, with Apollo and the Muses in the centre, was by Bubb. The theatre, one of the largest in Europe, was capable of accommodating 2,500 spectators, and there were five tiers of boxes.

Among the earliest operas performed at this theatre were the *Semiramide* and the *Barbiere*—the former by Bianchi, and the latter by Pacini, both of which were thrust aside, on the same boards, and in the course of twenty years by the two *chef d'œuvres* of Rossini.

Among the early vocal notabilities of the King's Theatre we must rank the honoured name of Braham, who made his *début* in 1796, when in his four-and-twentieth year, and rose at once to the popularity which he maintained almost to his death. He was the first great English tenor who had appeared on the Italian boards and brought to them the taste and cultivation of the Italian school. Many of our readers must have heard him when he was long past his prime, and, even then, in oratorio must rank him as the grandest and most finished singer of their remembrance.

Mrs. Billington was also one of the early stars of this house, and the only Englishwoman of eminence who had appeared on the Italian boards since the days of Cicilia Davies and Anastasia Robinson. Her associate was the beautiful Grasini, the aunt of Madame Grisi, and who, both in talent and in person, so well foreshadowed her great relation.

Among the great events of the theatre was its introduction to England of the music of Mozart. *La Clemenza di Tito* was performed for the first time on the 29th of March, 1806; the *Così fan Tutte* on the 9th of May, 1811; and the *Zauberflöte* on the 6th of June ensuing, the brilliant list being completed by the *Nozze de Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, both of which were produced in 1817.

The year 1806 was also distinguished by the first appearance of Catalani, whose voice was the most remarkable that had been heard on the Italian stage, and whose powers were equally wonderful in comic and serious opera.

In 1818 this theatre introduced to England the music of Rossini. The first opera was the *Tancredi*, which was speedily followed by the *Barbiere*, the *Cenerentola* and the *Italiana in Algieri*, all of which leaped at once into the popularity they still retain.

Among the events that are still within the memory of the musical public are, the first appearance of Madame Pasta, who in 1824 burst on our public, in all the grandeur of her tragic powers and her deep melodious voice, in the Desdemona of *Rossini*, and the visit in the same year of

the great composer himself as director of the King's Theatre. In 1825 these boards introduced the last male soprano who has been heard by a London audience, Signor Veluti, who made his *débüt* in the first opera by Meyerbeer that was given in this country, the *Crociato in Egitto*, and it is but justice we should state that the singer was quite as successful as the clever work that he appeared in. In 1828 the theatre, which had been under a succession of managers—whom it had impoverished or ruined—Mr. Taylor, Mr. Waters, Mr. Ayrton, Mr. Ebers, and, lastly, Mr. Boscha, passed into the hands of Messrs. Laurent and Laporte, who signalled their outset by introducing another great star to the London public—Mdlle. Sontag, whose merits as a bravura singer, all who heard her will own, have never been surpassed. In 1832, a still greater light appeared in the person of Madam Grisi, the greatest lyric tragedian in all respects that has ever graced our Italian boards, and whose good fortune it was to be associated with three of the most extraordinary singers that ever sung on the same stage—Rubini, Tamburini and Lablache, all of whom are still well-remembered in the way they sustained the works of Bellini, Donizetti and Meyerbeer, the *Sonnambula*, the *Lucia*, the *Huguenots* and many others, and stamped their period, which lasted up to 1838, as the most brilliant, in a vocal respect, that has ever distinguished the opera in this country.

The long reign of Mr. Lumley was the most brilliant in the annals of the theatre. Long the confidential associate and assistant of Laporte, he succeeded to the inheritance of a troubled dominion. The year 1841 had been signalled by the famous "Omnibus," or "Tamburini" row. The manager, instigated by Mr. Lumley, had endeavoured to break up the artistic clique which had rendered his authority in his own house small indeed. He wished to engage new artists, and as a first step declined to re-engage Tamburini, who had been the most determined of his opponents. But the great baritone was as powerful outside as within the walls of the theatre, and the other principal vocalists brought all their influence to bear to maintain him in his position. When the house opened for the season, and Coletti appeared in the place of Tamburini, the aristocratic occupants of the "omnibus box" created such a disturbance that the performance was stopped by the cries of "Tamburini!" and at last a party of young men, headed by Prince George of Cambridge, leaped upon the stage. The manager in vain begged that the performance might be allowed to proceed, and at length undertook to communicate with Tamburini. Ultimately, through the medium of Count D'Orsay, the offended baritone consented to reappear. The remainder of the season was distinguished by a series of dramatic performances, sustained by Rachel and a French company; and by the first appearance of Ronconi, as Enrico, in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Before the year had ended, Laporte died in Paris, and Mr. Lumley was induced to undertake the responsibility of management.

The year 1847 was "the year of secession." Costa, Grisi, Mario, Persiani and Tamburini joined the new Opera-house in Covent-garden; and it became a serious question whether London could support two Italian Opera-houses. Mr. Lumley struggled gallantly—brought out Fraschini and Gardoni as tenors, the last achieving great popularity; and finally outstripping all rivalry by the appearance, on the 4th of May, of Jenny Lind, who had been secured with so much difficulty, and whose engagement resulted in such prolonged litigation with Mr. Bunn, the lessee of Drury Lane Theatre. Jenny "came, saw and conquered," and the manager was triumphant. Next season, she was still the "bright, particular star," exciting undiminished enthusiasm. Cruvelli appeared, and her fine voice and impulsive genius made their mark. That season, too, was signalled by the first appearance of Sims Reeves at this theatre. He was disappointed at not being cast for Edgar, and soon retired. In 1849, Alboni, who had made such an impression at the rival house, joined Mr. Lumley's company. On the 18th of May, Jenny Lind made her last appearance; and the 7th of July was

marked by the re-appearance of a songstress of almost equal fame, the Sontag—now Countess Rossi—who, twenty years before, had charmed London, and who now, in consequence of change of fortune from political causes in that time of excitement, again appeared upon the stage. Time had not robbed her of a single grace; and her voice displayed all the beauty and freshness of youth. Her success almost compensated the manager and public for the retirement of the great Swedish singer. In the following year, Catharine Hayes and Sims Reeves appeared in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and the success of the native artists was one of the most gratifying kind. Another feature of the season was the production, on the 8th of July, of Halévy's *Tempest*, in which Lablache appeared as Caliban with wonderful effect. On the 11th of July, there was an apparition—no other than that of Pasta, who had been induced to reappear. It was a sad mistake. The figure, the attitudes, the gestures of the Queen of lyric tragedy were indeed there, but the voice, the thrilling tones of which had once held an audience spell-bound, had gone for ever—"Twas Greece, but living Greece no more!" In 1853 an attempt was made to establish a management by a limited liability company; but the effort failed, and for three years the theatre was closed; opening again in 1856, with the reappearance of Alboni, followed, on the 24th of May, by the fascinating little Maria Piccolomini, who charmed the critics as she did the public. A more pretentious singer of a different mould, Johanna Wagner, for whom the two Opera-houses contended in almost deadly strife, showed her superb figure on the 14th of June, as Romeo, but failed to deepen the impression. In 1857 the golden-voiced Giuglini appeared on the opening night, the 14th of April, in *La Favorita*, and at once achieved a position he never forfeited; and in the following season, Titiens, the great successor of Pasta and Grisi, appeared on the 13th of April as Valentina in the *Huguenots*.

Mr. Lumley then retired from the management of the theatre, and Mr. E. T. Smith and Mr. Mapleson followed. The history of their management is too recent to need recapitulation. Titiens, Giuglini (till his insanity and premature death), Ilma de Murska, Mongini, Guarducci, Trebelli, Santley, Gassier, Nilsson and Kellogg have well maintained the fame of the establishment.

MR. J. H. MAPLESON has written to deny, most emphatically, the truth of the rumour that the site of Her Majesty's Theatre is to be appropriated for the purpose of a "West-end Post Office." We understand that the theatre will be very shortly re-built.

THE thirty-fifth annual meeting of the Sacred Harmonic Society was in every respect highly satisfactory; and the thanks voted to Mr. Costa could but inadequately convey the unanimous feeling that his unwearied exertions for the welfare of the society had mainly contributed to its present state of prosperity. The printed report contains a thirty-five years' retrospect, from the commencement of the Society in 1832 to the five hundredth concert, which took place in Exeter Hall on the 13th December, 1867. Many interesting facts are here related; and the fund which the association has gradually accumulated is a proof how earnestly the members have worked in the cause, and how much the society has done towards educating the public taste to such a point as to make sacred periodical concerts so highly remunerative. It was intimated at the meeting that the committee had entered into arrangements with the Crystal Palace Company for another Handel Festival in the present year, which is expected to be equal, if not superior, to its predecessors. The accounts of the Society show it to be in a most flourishing condition, the property being only a little under £10,000, including £4,500 in the public funds.

THE death of Pacini—the composer of many Italian operas, some of which were at one time highly popular—is announced as having lately taken place at the age of 71.

A CONCERT in aid of the funds of the School of Arms of the First Surrey Rifles was given on Wednesday evening, the 15th ult., in the Drill Hall, Brunswick-road, Camberwell. The principal vocalists were Miss Ellen Glanville (who was highly effective in Macfarren's song, "The beating of my own heart;" and the popular "Il Bacio"), Miss Holland, Privates Dunkley and Croft, and Mr. Belcher. The solo instrumentalists were Mrs. Charles Ernest (Pianoforte), and Mr. Clay (Cornet). There were also some excellent recitations by Mr. H. J. Dakin. The concert was thoroughly successful.

An Evening Concert was given at the School for the Blind, St. John's Wood, on the 18th ult., in aid of the funds of the charity. Among the vocalists were Miss Pringle, Miss Bycroft, Mr. D'Este, Miss McQuire, Miss Scratchley, and Mr. E. Barnes. The three last received well-deserved encores in their respective songs. We must award especial praise to Miss Baillie (the Pianist), whose performance of Benedict's Fantasia "Erin," was highly successful. The blind pupils performed a Christmas Madrigal by Ions, "The Wintry winds," and Stevens' Glee, "From Oberon in Fairy land;" being encored in the latter, they substituted "The Dream," by Miss Stirling. The precision with which these latter pieces were sung gave evidence of the careful training the pupils had received from their indefatigable and talented master, Mr. Edwin Barnes, who officiated as conductor on the occasion with his usual ability.

THE new Concert Hall at Brighton has been formally opened with a Festival of considerable importance. *Elijah* and the *Messiah* were the principal works given; and at the miscellaneous concerts, Benedict's *St. Cecilia* and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* were included. The vocalists were Madame Lemmens-Sherrington, Madame Sainton-Dolby, Miss Rose Hersee, Miss Julia Elton, Fräulein Mehlhorn, Madlle. Angèle, Madame Rudersdorff, Madlle. Drasdil, Mr. W. H. Cummings, Mr. George Perren, Mr. Santley, and Mr. Lewis Thomas. The performances were under the able direction of Mr. Benedict; and the Festival, which lasted two days, was highly successful.

THE Choral Class of the City of London College, Leadenhall-street, under the direction of Mr. F. M. Wenborn, gave a concert before a large audience at the College, on Thursday evening, the 19th ult. The solo music (sustained entirely by members of the class) was very creditably performed; and some unaccompanied quartetts by the director and others, were especially well-received. The choruses and part-songs were also carefully sung; one with a *Jubilate* by concealed singers, being very effective.

POPULAR readings, interspersed with music, appear to be on the increase. Notices of two which have recently taken place, have been forwarded to us; the first at the Lecture Hall, Greenwich, and the second at the Public Hall, Croydon. At each of these the musical portion of the entertainment was under the direction of Mr. Joseph R. W. Harding, whose singing is spoken of in the highest terms. Two of Mr. Harding's professional pupils—Madlle. Faviere and Miss De Lacy—also met with the utmost success in their vocal solos, the report furnished us stating that "nearly all the music was encored." If this were really the case the programme must have been unusually short, or the concert unusually long.

THE Festival of the Consecration of the Church of St. Mark's, Notting-hill, was celebrated on Wednesday, 27th November, when a full choral service was given in the evening (for the first time since the erection of the church), under the direction of Mr. E. W. Wheeler, the talented organist and choirmaster. The choir, assisted by many gentlemen from St. Mary, Haggerston, and other church choirs, numbered between 60 and 70. The service was well intoned by the Rev. E. K. Kendall, the esteemed incumbent. Goss's Anthem, "Stand up and bless the Lord," and the hymns "Urbs Beata," "O Para-

dise," and "The Pilgrims of the Night," were sung by the choir with great feeling and effect, the congregation joining in the hymns. The Offertory was devoted to the Organ Fund.

THE Chalk Farm Choral Society held its first meeting on the 18th ult., at the Albert Hall, Winchester-street, Malden Road. The principal vocalists were sopranos, Miss Smith and Miss F. Pavay; altos, Master Smith and Miss Bussett; bass, Mr. Charles Pavay. All the solos were most efficiently rendered, and many of the choruses were re-demanded. Mr. J. A. Drage conducted with his usual ability.

WE understand that the collection at the late Hereford Festival amounted to £1410 5s., being nearly £100 more than was ever previously obtained at either of the three Cities.

MR. BRINLEY RICHARDS gave a Pianoforte Recital at the Hanover-square Rooms on the 10th ult., when he performed an excellent selection of music. The first part of the programme was devoted to the compositions of various writers, and included Beethoven's "Sonata Pathétique," two of Henselt's light pieces, Professor Bennett's "Genevieve," Weber's Grand Polonaise (Op. 50), Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith," &c. The second part consisted exclusively of the concert-giver's compositions, interspersed with some of his highly popular arrangements. All these were performed with a brilliancy of finger and a fluency of execution which made us wonder that Mr. Richards is so rarely heard in public. The room was well filled, and the applause liberal and enthusiastic.

MR. HENRY LESLIE has issued a preliminary prospectus of his new season which promises well, and will delight all who watch the slow but sure progress of high class music in this country. Amongst the unaccompanied works, selections from the compositions of Sir Henry R. Bishop, and several of Mendelssohn's Part-songs for male voices are included; and the orchestral concerts will be almost exclusively devoted to the works of the great masters. Mozart's *Vesperæ di Dominica*, Cherubini's *Inclina Domine* (a hymn for soprano solo, orchestra and chorus), Mendelssohn's music to *Antigone* and *Edipus*, Bach's Mass in B minor, and many other compositions, will be either performed entire or selected from; and one of the principal orchestral attractions will be Mendelssohn's *Reformation Symphony*. The concerts will commence early in February.

MR. A. LAWSON, the Scottish vocalist, gave an entertainment at the Concert Hall, Store-street, entitled, "The songs of Scotland," on Thursday, the 28th November. The first two parts comprised songs written by Burns. Mr. Kilner most ably assisted at the pianoforte, playing the accompaniments with great taste and feeling.

MR. HENRY BAKER, of New College, Oxford, has recently received the degree of Bachelor of Music.

MR. T. H. WRIGHT, the eminent harpist, gave two lectures on the "History of the Harp and its Music," at the London Institution, on Monday evenings, November 25th and December 2nd, before crowded audiences. The lectures—which contained some highly interesting information respecting the origin and history of the instrument—were listened to with the utmost attention; and the illustrations on the harp, by the lecturer, were received, as they deserved to be, with frequent marks of approbation. The vocal music was given by Mrs. Harriette Lee with much effect; and several songs (amongst which was one by Mr. Wright, called "The Blind Harper") were enthusiastically encored.

Reviews.

Schubert's Works, edited by CHARLES HALLE. (Chappell and Co.)

FRANZ SCHUBERT, born in 1797, and dying in 1828, is even yet chiefly known to the general public as a